

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8, 10-17, 19-29, and 32-41, including independent claims 1, 14, and 25, are currently pending in the present application. In the Office Action, claims 9-11, 18-20, and 31-33 were said to be allowable if rewritten into independent form. Applicants have thus amended independent claims 1, 14, and 25 to incorporate the limitations of dependent claims 9, 18, and 31, respectively. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 14, and 25 patentably define over the cited references.

Applicants also respectfully submit that, at least for the reasons indicated above relating to corresponding independent claims 1, 14, and 25, dependent claims 2-8, 12-13, 15-17, 21-24, 26-29, and 34-41 patentably define over the cited references. However, the patentability of such dependent claims does not necessarily hinge on the patentability of independent claims 1, 14, and 25. In particular, some or all of these claims may possess features that are independently patentable, regardless of the patentability of claims 1, 14, and 25.

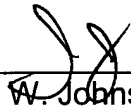
It is thus believed that the present application is in complete condition for allowance and favorable action, therefore, is respectfully requested. Examiner Stephens is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned, however, should any issues remain after consideration of this Amendment.

Please charge any additional fees required by this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 04-1403.

Appl. No. 10/037,472
Amdt. dated Oct. 29, 2004
Reply to Office Action dated June 30, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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